

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 have been examined. Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Also, the Examiner has indicated that claims 5 and 6 contain allowable subject matter, but are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

I. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,502,580 to Yoda et al. ("Yoda") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,046,820 to Konishi ("Konishi").

A. Claims 1, 9 and 11

By this Amendment, Applicant has canceled claims 1, 9 and 11, without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, the rejection of such claims is now moot.

B. Claim 2

By this Amendment, Applicant has incorporated the allowable subject matter of claim 5 into claim 2. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 2 is now moot.

C. Claims 3, 4, 7 and 8

Since claims 3, 4, 7 and 8 are dependent upon claim 2, Applicant submits that such claims are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

D. Claims 10 and 12

By this Amendment, Applicant has incorporated subject matter analogous to the allowable subject matter of claim 5 into claims 10 and 12. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the rejection of claims 10 and 12 is now moot.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

As set forth above, the Examiner has indicated that claims 5 and 6 contain allowable subject matter. By this Amendment, Applicant has incorporated claim 5 into claim 2. Accordingly, claim 5 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any

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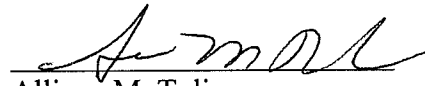
Respectfully submitted,

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER



Allison M. Tulino
Registration No. 48,294

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